expansion may have caused some buoyancy in the general price level.

(c) and (d) The average annual inflation rate based on wholesale price index between 1981 to 1990 was 7.2% compared to 9.6% in the preceding decade. (*i.e.* 1970—80).

(e) to (g) A number of anti-inflationary measures were initiated by the Government to dampen the inflationary pressures. Improved supply management in essential commodities has been successfully accomplished by way of open markets sale of foodgrains by FCI, import of nearly one million tonnes of sugar for PDS. Edible Oil price has been kept stable through timely imports for PDS. Shortfall in domestic cotton production was made up by permitting duty free import of cotton.

Government is striving to limit the fiscal deficit for 1994-95 to 6% of GDP as against 7.3% (RE) last year.

Merger of New Bank of India with P.N.B.

969. SHRI JAGDISH PRASAD MATHUR : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government are aware that after merger of the New Bank of India with the Punjab National Bank certain anomalies have cropped up, such as (i) arbitrary change of gratuity criteria, resulting in financial loss; (ii) arbitrary reduction in the age of retirement of officers; (iii) loss of seniority in many cases ; (iv) reduction of several perks that were available to the erstwhile employees of the New Bank of India; and

(b) if so, what directions are given or would be given so that the employees of the erstwhile New Bank of India are not put to undue harm ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI M. V. CHANDRASHEKARA MURTHY) : (a) and (b) Punjab National Bank (PNB) has reported that in accordance with the provisions contained in Clause 3(3) and 5 (2) of the New Bank of India (Amalagamation and Transfer of Undertakings) Scheme, 1993, it has, with the approval of its Board of Directors, made some changes in the terms and conditions of service of the officers and other employees belonging to Erstwhile New Bank of India (ENBI) on their absorption in PNB for the purpose of maintaining uniformity amongst officers and employees of the bank as a whole. While doing so, certain benefits available to the employees of ENBI could not be protected on their absorption in PNB because similar benefits were not available to the employees of PNB at the relevant time. The Bank has further reported that some employees of ENBI aggrieved by the decision of PNB, have filed petitions in High Courts at different places and as such, the matter is subjudice.

क्षेत्रीय ग्रामीण बैंकों द्वारा ऋण

970. **श्री कनकसिंह मोहनसिंह मंगरोला:** क्या वित्त मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि :

(क) क्या यह सच है कि क्षेत्रीय ग्रामीण बैंक लघु सड़क परिवहन परिचालकों को शत-प्रतिशत वित्त सहायता दे रहे हैं ;

(ख) यदि हां, तो पिछले दो वर्षों में इस संबंध में लाभान्वित होने वाले परिचालकों की राज्य-वार संख्या कितनी है ; और

(ग) इस सुविधा को प्राप्त करने के बारे में क्या प्रतिक्रिया है ?